



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
May 1, 2019

CLEVELAND LEAD ADVOCATES FOR SAFE HOUSING COMMENDS LEAD SAFE CLEVELAND COALITION FOR RECOMMENDATIONS THAT INCLUDE “LEAD SAFE” CITY MANDATE BUT SEEKS ADDITIONAL PROTECTIONS THAT ARE WITHIN ITS PROPOSAL. CALLS ON CITY COUNCIL TO INCLUDE ALL PROTECTIONS WHEN NEW ORDINANCE IS DRAFTED

Cleveland, OH – Cleveland Lead Advocates for Safe Housing (CLASH) commends the Lead Safe Cleveland Coalition (LSCC) for its policy recommendations to address the lead poisoning crisis in the City of Cleveland, including requiring that all rental housing be “lead safe.” CLASH is urging City Council to review the proposed CLASH ordinance along with the LSCC recommendations and pass a new law this summer with all the necessary protections for citizens.

Over the last four years members of CLASH have researched and advocated for a proactive and preventative lead safe housing law that conforms to best practices recognized across the nation for protecting children from lead poisoning. CLASH is encouraged that the LSCC recommendations directly tracks with the preventative testing “Lead Safe” model CLASH has been advocating for through its recent initiative petition effort supported by over 10,000 citizens. However, some important policy solutions are missing.

“I would say that a significant amount of CLASH’s ordinance is included in the LSCC recommendations, including our core vision of a lead safe housing mandate for Cleveland’s rental properties,” said Attorney Rebecca Maurer who helped draft CLASH’s legislation and has been attending the LSCC meetings. *“We are encouraged to see how far civic leadership has come. 97% of the LSCC Policy Subcommittee approved mandatory proactive testing. When combined with over 10,000 signatures CLASH gathered from community members in recent months, there’s a clear consensus that City Council needs to pass an effective lead safe housing law.”*

Although CLASH recognizes the hard work of the LSCC policy committee, CLASH continues to have reservations over specific deficiencies in the proposed recommendations. For example, daycare centers, including home daycares, that are not required to be made lead safe under the current LSCC recommendations. Moreover, the recommendations as written do not provide badly needed tenant protections to support and empower renters. The CLASH proposal also provided for a citizen advisory board along with quarterly public reports and public meetings regarding the bill's implementation and a stronger lead testing procedure within city rental housing.

"And let's not forget why we are here," added Yvonka Hall, outreach director for the Cuyahoga County Progressive Caucus, and CLASH member, "lead poisoning is indeed a health problem with a housing solution. The impact of lead poisoning on education, employment and lifelong disparities is too great to be dismissed. The LSCC recommendations must be translated into a proposed law that the public can support that must be passed by City Council. Our work to make Cleveland lead safe has always focused on working together to protect our children from the dangers of lead poisoning."

CLASH is continuing with its preparation to file a Writ of Mandamus to reverse the decision by the City Council Clerk not to submit the CLASH ordinance to City Council for review and a vote as the city charter requires. CLASH will also soon start another initiative petition effort while City Council considers a new law and will be prepared to go to the citizens to decide if City Hall does not.

"CLASH will continue to represent the needs of our citizens to end the lead poisoning crisis. City Council must allow for all voices to be heard during the review of a new law," said Jeff Johnson, former City Councilman and a member of CLASH. "We are eager to engage in the committee process and we are committed to see the process through to passed legislation. If not, CLASH will let the people vote and decide."

ABOUT CLEVELAND LEAD ADVOCATES FOR SAFE HOUSING

Cleveland Lead Advocates for Safe Housing (CLASH) is dedicated to protecting the most vulnerable citizens in the City of Cleveland. Member organizations include the Cleveland Lead Safe Network, Single Payer Access Network, Cuyahoga County Progressive Caucus, Black Lives Matter of Cuyahoga County, Cleveland End Poverty Now Coalition, Organize!Ohio, Northeast Ohio Coalition for the Homeless and the Cleveland Democratic Socialists of America.

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